

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 010773
ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 H-02 SSM-05 PA-02
PRS-01 SSO-00 /054 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/P:EOJONES:RGH
APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN
S/PRS - MR. FUNSETH (INFO)
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SSM - MR. MC ANDREW
NEA - MS. GRIFFIN
NEA/IAI - MR. SMITH
NEA/ARN - MR. REUTHER
NEA/AFN - MS. WEISLOGEL
EUR/WE - MS. SMITH
EUR/P-MR. SEIDNER

-----180119Z 072558 /63

O 172300Z JAN 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
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USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
CINCEUR

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GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL, CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - JANUARY 17

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR JANUARY 17,
1977:

Q. FRIDAY AFTERNOON THE SECRETARY SAW ISRAELI AMBASSADOR
DINITZ, AND DINITZ LATER SAID THAT IT HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED
THAT THERE WERE AMERICAN PARTS GOING TO HONDURAS IN THE
FORM OF ENGINES.

A. YES.

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Q. ONE, WHAT ACTION, IF ANY, IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT
TAKING ABOUT THIS? AND, TWO, IS THE STATE DEPARTMENT
LOOKING INTO ANY OTHER CASES?

A. FIRST, I THINK AS WE INDICATED OVER THE WEEKEND,
AMBASSADOR DINITZ GAVE US THE EXPLANATION WHICH HE OUT-
LINED TO THE PRESS AFTER HIS MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY;
AND WE ACCEPTED THAT EXPLANATION. WE NOTED THAT
AMBASSADOR DINITZ SAID THAT NO FURTHER SALES OF THIS
AIRCRAFT BY ISRAEL ARE CONTEMPLATED. WE ARE INFORMING

CONGRESS OF THE FACTS THROUGH THE USUAL CHANNELS IN
ACCORDANCE WITH PROVISIONS OF THE ARMS CONTROL ACT. AND
FOR OUR PART WE CONSIDER THE MATTER CLOSED.

WITH REGARD TO YOUR SECOND QUESTION ABOUT OTHER REPORTS,
WE HAVE LOOKED INTO THOSE AND THEY HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED.
AND I BELIEVE THAT AMBASSADOR DINITZ PROVIDED THE
SECRETARY WITH A SATISFACTORY EXPLANATION.

Q. AND DO YOU CONSIDER THOSE OTHER MATTERS CLOSED THEN AS WELL?

A. THAT IS MY UNDERSTANDING--FROM THE SECRETARY'S VIEW-- THAT THE EXPLANATION HE RECEIVED FROM THE AMBASSADOR WAS SATISFACTORY.

Q. AND ARE THOSE OTHER CASES SPECIFICALLY SOUTH AFRICA AND CHILE?

A. I AM NOT ABLE TO COMMENT SPECIFICALLY ON WHAT THE CASES INVOLVE.

Q. LET ME JUST PIN IT DOWN. SO THEN THESE OTHER CASES OF THESE UNNAMED COUNTRIES YOU NOW ALSO CONSIDER CLOSED?

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A. THEY WERE DISCUSSED, AND THE AMBASSADOR DID PROVIDE THE SECRETARY WITH A SATISFACTORY EXPLANATION.

Q. IS THAT MATTER NOW CLOSED?

A. THAT WOULD BE THE INFERENCE I WOULD TAKE FROM THE SECRETARY'S BELIEF THAT THE AMBASSADOR'S EXPLANATIONS WERE SATISFACTORY.

Q. WHAT WAS THE AMBASSADOR'S EXPLANATION?

A. I AM NOT IN A POSITION TO PROVIDE DETAILS OF THEIR CONVERSATION.

Q. AND YOU'RE NOT IN A POSITION TO DISCUSS EITHER THE SUBSTANCE OR THE COUNTRIES --

A. THAT IS CORRECT.

Q. -- OR WHETHER ANY SIZEABLE NUMBERS OF U.S. EQUIPMENT--

A. I DO NOT HAVE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION.

Q. IS THERE GOING TO BE A REPORT ON THESE OTHER INSTANCES TO CONGRESS?

A. THERE WOULD BE IF IT IS REQUIRED.

Q. THERE WOULD BE IF ITS REQUIRED. YOU MEAN THERE WOULD BE IF THERE'S A VIOLATION?

A. THAT IS RIGHT. OBVIOUSLY, WE WOULD COMPLY WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE ARMS EXPORT CONTROL ACT.

Q. WELL NOW, IS THERE A CONCLUSION THAT IT'S NOT REQUIRED?

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A. I HAVE NO INDICATION THAT WE HAVE FOUND IT NECESSARY AT THIS TIME TO INFORM THE CONGRESS. BUT LET ME CHECK THAT POINT SPECIFICALLY.

Q. WHAT IS THE AMERICAN POSITION ON ISRAELI ARMS EXPORT, SAY--NOT NECESSARILY INCLUDING AMERICAN TECHNOLOGY OR PARTS?

A. OUR ONLY OFFICIAL PUBLIC COMMENT WOULD BE RESTRICTED TO THE QUESTION INVOLVING THE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY OR ACTUAL EQUIPMENT.

Q. NOW, THAT'S NOT WHAT HE ASKED YOU THOUGH. OBVIOUSLY, THERE IS AN INTER-RELATION BETWEEN OTHER COUNTRIES' ARMS SHIPMENTS AND THE UNITED STATES ARMS SHIPMENTS--PARTICULARLY IN AN AREA LIKE THE MIDDLE EAST. DO WE HAVE A POLICY ON ISRAEL AND OTHER COUNTRIES SHIPPING ARMS; AND, IF SO, WHAT IS IT?

A. HIS QUESTION WAS IN A GENERAL SENSE, AND MY ANSWER WAS IN A GENERAL SENSE.

Q. WELL, YOU'RE SAYING IN EFFECT THAT THERE IS NO U.S. POLICY ON IT.

A. NO, I DID NOT SAY THAT. I SAID HE ASKED--WOULD YOU REPEAT YOUR QUESTION SO I AM SURE I UNDERSTOOD IT?

Q. WELL, I'LL REPHRASE IT. ISRAEL HAS BECOME, IN A WAY, AN ARMS EXPORTER. HOW DO YOU VIEW THIS?

A. A LOT OF OUR ALLIES AND FRIENDS ARE EXPORTERS OF ARMS. AND IN A GENERAL SENSE, OBVIOUSLY WE WOULD HOPE THAT THEIR SALES WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH OUR OWN JUDGMENT

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IN A GIVEN AREA. BUT I AM NOT GOING TO COMMENT ON A

SPECIFIC AREA.

Q. ON THE HONDURAS SALE, CAN WE HAVE THE SPECIFICS NOW?

A. YOU MEAN HOW MANY; WHAT THE DETAILS WERE?

Q. YES.

A. I WOULD WANT TO CHECK WHAT AMBASSADOR DINITZ SAID. I THINK HE MADE SOME REFERENCE TO IT ON SATURDAY, AND I WOULD WANT TO CHECK WHAT HE SAID.

Q. WELL, WHAT DO YOU SAY?

A. LET ME CHECK.

Q. HAS THE INFORMATION GONE TO THE HILL?

A. YES.

Q. WELL THEN, CAN WE HAVE A COPY OF IT?

A. LET ME SEE IF WE CAN MAKE A COPY AVAILABLE.

Q. DID THE UNITED STATES PROVIDE FRANCE WITH INFORMATION THAT THE PALESTINIAN ABU DAOUD WAS ABU DAOUD?

A. I HAVE NOT, AND WE CUSTOMARILY HAVE NOT, COMMENTED ON STORIES WHICH WOULD SUGGEST AN EXCHANGE OF THAT KIND OF INFORMATION. BUT IN A GENERAL SENSE THE UNITED STATES IS ACTIVELY COOPERATING WITH A NUMBER OF FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS TO COMBAT INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM, AND THIS COOPERATION INCLUDES THE EXCHANGE OF A BROAD RANGE OF INFORMATION ON KNOWN TERRORIST AND TERRORIST GROUPS. BUT I AM NOT GOING TO COMMENT SPECIFICALLY ONE WAY OR ANOTHER ON THE QUESTION

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OF ABU DAOUD AND FRANCE.

Q. WHY NOT?

A. BECAUSE IT IS OUR POLICY NOT TO COMMENT ON SPECIFIC DETAILS OF EXCHANGES OF INFORMATION.

Q. WELL, WHY IS IT THE POLICY? I MEAN IT SEEMS LIKE A SILLY POLICY. YOU'RE NOT GIVING AWAY ANY STATE SECRETS POST FACTO, ARE YOU?

A. I THINK THE JUDGMENT IS MADE BY THOSE WHO ARE

ENGAGED IN THESE KINDS OF EXCHANGES THAT A PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF THIS KIND OF ACTIVITY WOULD JEOPARDIZE THE GOAL OF THE EXCHANGE IN THE FIRST PLACE WHICH IS TO RESTRICT THE ACTIVITIES OF TERRORISTS.

Q. YOU COMMENTED AT SOME CONSIDERABLE LENGTH ABOUT THE INCIDENT AND YOU SAID THE UNITED STATES EXPRESSED DISMAY ABOUT IT. AND THE UNITED STATES WAS CALLED IN AND ITS EMISSARY WAS REBUKED BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT FOR EXPRESSING DISMAY. WHY SHOULD WE NOT HAVE THE INFORMATION AS TO WHETHER THE UNITED STATES DID IN FACT INFORM THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT IN ADVANCE THAT THIS WAS THE MAN, WHICH WOULD SHED SOME LIGHT ON WHAT IT IS YOU'RE EXPRESSING DISMAY ABOUT?

A. FOR THE REASON I STATED--THAT IS WHY WE ARE NOT PROVIDING THE INFORMATION--AND WE SAID AT THE TIME WHY WE WERE EXPRESSING OUR DISMAY. AND I REFER YOU TO THAT REPLY.

Q. I WOULD LIKE TO NOTE THAT THAT'S TOTALLY UNSATISFACTORY BECAUSE THE ISSUE IS THAT THE MAN WAS RELEASED ON GROUNDS THAT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT COULD NOT DETERMINE UNCLASSIFIED

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LEGALLY WHETHER HE WAS ABU DAOUD, AND WHAT WE ARE ASKING YOU HERE IS A PERFECTLY VALID QUESTION--NAMELY, DID THE UNITED STATES HAVE INFORMATION ON ABU DAOUD?

A. ANY QUESTION IS VALID. I AM NOT QUARRELING WITH YOU WHETHER IT IS A VALID QUESTION OR NOT. I AM JUST SAYING THAT I AM NOT ABLE TO ANSWER IT, THAT I --

Q. ALL RIGHT, AND I WANT TO PURSUE MY QUESTIONS HERE ON THE RECORD BECAUSE I THINK THE POSITION THAT'S BEEN LEFT HERE IS TOTALLY INCONSISTENT--NAMELY, IF THE UNITED STATES DID CONVEY TO FRANCE INFORMATION THAT ITS INTELLIGENCE WAS CONVINCED THAT THIS WAS ABU DAOUD, THEN IT SHEDS FURTHER QUESTION ON THE DECISION THAT WAS REACHED BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT. SO I SIMPLY WANT TO BRING THAT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE OFFICIALS MAKING THE DECISION THAT THIS INFORMATION SHOULD NOT BE RELEASED.

A. AND YOUR OBSERVATION AND VIEW IS NOTED.

Q. THANK YOU, BOB.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE010773
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EOJONES:RGH
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770017-0770
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770144/aaaabmpv.tel
Line Count: 329
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 693adb5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Sep-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3578505
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING - JANUARY 17 FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR JAN
TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, IS
To: ALGIERS BONN MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/693adb5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009